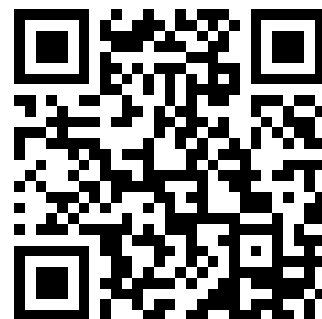

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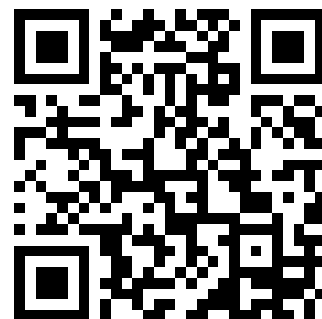
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Robert the Deuyll

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WITH THE TEXT OF WM. J. THOMS
ORNAMENTED BY HAROLD NELSON

ROBERT THE DEUYLL A ROMANCE



Robert the Devil.

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ROBERT THE DEUYLL
A ROMANCE



ROBERT THE DEUYLL

HERE BEGYNNETH THE LYFE OF THE MOOST MYSCHEUOUST ROBERT THE DEUYLL, WHICH WAS AFTERWARDE CALLED THE SERUANT OF GOD.

IT befel in tyme past, there was a duke in Normandye which was called Ouberte, the whiche duke was passynge ryche of goodes, and also vertuous of lyuyng, and loued and dred God above all thyng, and dyde grete almesse dedes, and exceeded all other in ryghtwysnesse and justyce, and moost cheualrouse in dedes of armes and notable actes doynge. This duke helde open house upon a Crystmasse daye, in a towne whiche was called Naverne, upon the Seyne, to the whiche courte came all the lordes and noble blode of Normandy. And because this noble duke was not maryed, his lordes nobles with one assente besought hym to marye and take a wyfe, to thentente that his lygnage myght be multiplyed thereby, and that they myght have a ryght heyre to enherite his landes after his dysceyse. To the whyche request this

good duke answered and sayd: "My lordes, what thyng that ye thynke best for me to do shall be done, upon a condycyon, in that ye wyll that I be maryed, that ye puruey me a wyfe accordynge to myn estate, for and yf I shol coueyte ony heyre or noblyer of blode than I am myselfe that myghte not stand with ryght, and yf I take one that is not of so noble an house as I am, that sholde be to me grete shame, and all my lygnage; wherefore me thynke it were better that I kepe me as I am, than to do that thyng that sholde not be myne honeste, and afterwarde repente me." Whan these wordes were spoken, and well consydered by the lordes that stode there present, then there rose up a wyse baron, and sayd to the duke: "My lorde ye speke very wysely, and lyke a noble prynce, but yf it please your hyeness to gyue audyence and here me speke, I shall shewe you of a certayne persone of whome ye shall enjoye yourselfe to here of her, and the whyche ye shall obteyne I knowe well." Than answered the duke, and sayd: "shewe me then who that persone is." "Gracyous lorde," sayd the baron unto the duke, "the duke of Bourgone hath a doughter whyche excedethe al other in beaute, curteyse and deboynayre wysdome and good maneres, the whiche ye may have yf ye wyll desyre her, for I knowe well there wyll no man say naye thereto." To the whiche the good duke answered and said, that lady playesd hym ryght well, and that the baron had gyven hym good and wyse counsell. And in shorte tyme after that, this lady was demaunded of her fader, the duke of Bourgone, which gaue hym her wyllingly. And then theyr brydale was kepte honourably, which were to longe to write.



HOWE THE DUKE OF NORMANDYE WITH GRETE ROYALTE BROUGHTE HIS WYFE, THE DOUGHTER OF THE DUKE OF BURGONE, IN TO ROAN IN NORMANDYE, AFTER HE HAD MARYED HER.

AFTER that the forsayd duke had maryed the sayd ladye, he brought her with a grete company of barons, knyghtes, and ladyes, with grete tryumphe and glorye, into the lande of Normandye, and in the cyte of Roan, in the whiche cyte she was honourably receyued, and with grete melodye; and there was grete amyte betwene the Bourgonyons and the Normans, which I lete passe for to come the soner to my mater. The forsayd duke and duchesse lyued togyder the space of xviii yere without any childe. Whether it were Godde's wyl it sholde be so, or it were thrughe theyr own defaulte, I can not juge, for it were better other whyle that some people had no chylterne, and also it were better for the fader and the moder to gete no chyldren, thenne to lacke of chastysynge, the chyldren and fader and moder sholde al go to the deuyll: yet was this duke and duchesse deuout people, which loved and drede God, and gave grete almesse; and what tyme this duke wolde meddle with his lady, he euer prayed to God to sende hym a chylde, to honoure and serue God, and to multiply and fortyfy his lynage; but nother with prayer nor with almesse dedes this good duke and duchesse could gete no chyldren.

HOW UPON A TYME THIS DUKE AND DUCH-ESS WALKED ALONE, SORE COMPLANYNGE THE ONE TO THE OTHER THAT THEY COUDE HAVE NO CHYLDE TOGYDER.



UPON a tyme this duke and duchesse walked, and the duke began to shewe his mynde to his ladye, saynge, "Madame, we be not fortunate in so much that we can gete noo chyldren; and they that made the maryage betwene us bothe they dyde grete synne, for I beleue and ye had been geuen to an other man, ye sholde haue had

chylde, and I also yf I had an other ladye." This lady understood his sayenge: she answered softly, saynge thus: "Good lorde, we must thanke God of that whiche he sendeth us, and take it pacyently of what so euer it be."

HOW ROBERT THE DEUYLL WAS CONCEYUED, AND HOW HIS MODER GAUE HYM TO THE DEUYLL IN HIS CONCEPCYON.



HIS duke upon a tyme rode oute an hountyng in a grete angre and pensyfness, for thought that he coulde haue no chylde, sore complanyng, saynge to hymselfe, I see many women haue many fayre chylde in whiche they enjoy gretely, by which I se wel that I am hated of God, and meruayle it is that I fall not in dyspare, for it greueth me so sore at my herte that I can gete no chyl-dren. The deuyl, which is alwaye redy to deceyue mankynde, tempted the good duke, and troubled his mynde so that he wyst not what to do nor say. Thus moued, he left his huntynge and wente home to his palayes, where he founde his ladye also vexed and moued. As he came home he toke her in his armes, and kyssed her, and dyde his will with her, sayenge his prayers to our Lorde in this wyse: "O! Lord Jhesu, I beseche the that I may get a chylde, at this houre, by the whiche thou mayst be honoured and served." But the ladye being so sore moued, spake thus folyshly, and said: "In the deuyle's name be it, in so muche as God hath not the power that I conceyue; and yf I be conceyued with chylde in this houre, I gyve it to the devyll, body and soule." And this same houre that this duke and duches were thus moued, the sayd lady was conceyued with a man chylde, whiche in his lyf wroughte moche myschefe, as ye shall here after this, but afterwards he was converted, and dyde grete penance, and dyed a holy man, as is shewed here after.





HOW ROBERT THE DEUYLL WAS BORNE,
AND WHAT GRETE PAYNE HIS MODER SUFF-
ERED IN HYS BYRTHE.

THIS duchesse, as we haue herd before, was conceyued with the forsayd chylde, which she bare ix monethes as comonly women goo with chylde; and ye may well perceyue that this lady coude not be delyuered without grete payn, for she trauelyed more than a moneth, and yf good prayers had not been, and almesse dedes, good werkes, and grete penance done for her, she had deyed of chylde, for all the ladyes and gentyl-women that there (were) with her wened, she wold have perysshed and deyed in trauallynge. Wherefore they were gretly abasshed and aferde with the merueylouse noise and tokens that they herde and se in the byrth of the said Robert the Deuyl, in that whan this chylde was borne, the sky waxed as darke as though it had been nyghte, as it is shewed in olde cronycles, that it thondreth and lyghtened so sore, that men thought the firmament had been open, and all the worlde sholde haue perysshed. And there blewe soo moche wynde out of the iiii quarters of the worlde, and was such storme and tempest, that al the hous trembled so sore, that it shoke a grete pece of it to the erth, in so moche that all they that were in the hous wened that the worlde had been at an ende, and that they, with the house and all, sholde haue sonken. But in short tyme it pleased God that all this trouble ceased, and the wedder clered up, and the chylde was brought to chyrch to be crystened, whiche was named Robert. This childe

was large of stature at his byrthe and he had been a yere old, whereof the people had grete wonder; and as this chylde was a berynge to the chirche to be crystned and home ayenst, it neuer ceased cryenge and houlynge. And in shorte space he had longe teeth wherwith he bote the norshes pappes in such wyse, that there was no woman durst gyue hym souke, for he bote off the hedes of theyr brestes; wherefore they were fayne to gyue hym souke and to brynge hym up with an horne. And when he was twelve moneth olde, he coude speke and go alone better than other chyldrne that were thre yere old. And the elder that this chylde Robert waxed, more crusted; and there was no man that coude rule hym: and whan he founde or coude come by ony chyldrne he smote and bote and cast stones at them, and brake theyr armes and legges and neckes, and scratte out theyr eyen out of theyr hedes, and therein was all his delyte and pleasure.

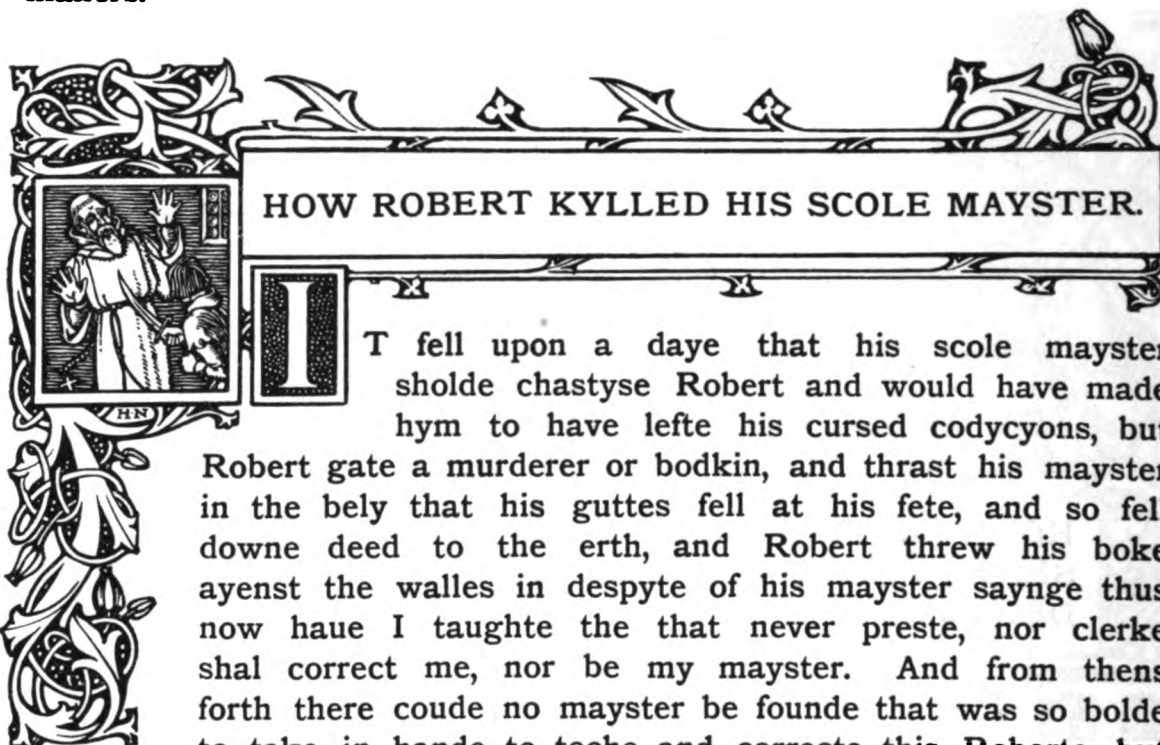




HOW ALL THE CHYLDREN WITH ONE AS-
SENTE NAMED THIS CHYLDE ROBERTE THE
DEUYLL.

THIS chylde within fewe yeares grewe maruaylously,
and more and more encreased of all, and boldness,
and shrewdness, and set by no correccyon, but was
euer smyttynge and tastynge, and cursed dedes
doynge. And some tyme there gadred togyder all
the boyes of the strete to fyghte with him, but whan they se
hym they durst not abyde hym, but cryed one to another,
"Here cometh the wode Robert!" an other many cryed, "Here
cometh the cursed madde Robert!" and some cryed, "Here
cometh Robert the Deuyll!" and thus cryenge they voyded all
the stretes, for they durst not abyde and loke hym in the face,
and forthwith the chyldrne that knewe hym with one assente
called hym Roberte the Deuyll, whiche name he kepte durynge
his lyfe, and shal do as longe as the world standeth. Whan
this chylde was seuen yere old or there aboute, the duke his
fader seyng and consyderynge his wicked condycyons, called hym
and sayd unto hym thus, "My sone me thyncke it necessary
and tyme, for me to gete you a wyse scole mayster, to

lerne vertues and doctrine, for ye be of age ynoughe," and whan the duke had thus sayd, he betoke his sone to a good dyscreet and wyse scole mayster to rule and teche hym all good condycyons and maners.



HOW ROBERT KYLLED HIS SCOLE MAYSTER.

IT fell upon a daye that his scole mayster sholde chastyse Robert and would have made hym to have lefte his cursed codycyons, but Robert gate a murderer or bodkin, and thrust his mayster in the bely that his guttes fell at his fete, and so fell downe deed to the erth, and Robert threw his boke ayenst the walles in despyte of his mayster saynge thus now haue I taughte the that never preste, nor clerke shal correct me, nor be my mayster. And from thens forth there coude no mayster be founde that was so bolde to take in hande to teche and correcte this Roberte, but were glad to let hym alone and have his owne wayes, and he put hymselfe to uyce and myschefe, and to no maner of vertue nor grace, nor wolde he lerne for no man lyuyng, but mocked both God and holy chyrche. And when he came to the chyrche and founde the prestes, and clarkes syngynge Goddes seruyce, he came preuely behynd them, and caste ashes or duste in theyr mouthes in dyspyte of God. And when he sawe any body in the chyrche besy in theyr prayers he wolde come behynde them and gyue them a sowse in the necke that theyr hedes kyssed the ground in so moche that euery body cursed hym for his wycked dedes doynge. And the duke his fader seyng his myscheuous dyspocysyon and cursed lyfe of his sone, he was so angry with hymselfe, that he wysshed hymself many tymes dede and out of the worlde. And the duchese in lykewyse was gretly moued and muche sorowefull by cawse of the myscheuous lyfe of her sone, saynge in this wyse, "My Lord our sone is nowe of sufficient age and able to bere armes, wherefore me thynke it were



best that ye made hym knyght if than he wolde remembre thordre of knyghthode whereby he myght leve his wyckedness." The duke was here withall content. And Robert had at that tyme but eyghtene yere of age.



HOW ROBERT THE DEUYLL WAS MADE KNYGHT BY THE DUKE HIS FADER.

THIS duke assembled upon a hye feast of Whitsontyde, all his barons and nobles of his lande, and the next of his kyn and frendes, in the presence of whome he called his sone to hym saynge thus, "Herke my sone Robert, and take hede what I shall tell you, it is so that by thaduyce of my counsell and good frendes, I am now aduysed to make you a knyght, to thentent that ye with other knyghtes to haunte chevalrye and knyghtes condycions, to thentente that ye shall leve and forsake your uyses and moost hatfull lyf." Robert herynge this, answered his fader, "I shall do your commandment but as for the ordre of knyghthode I set nothyng there by, for there is no degre shall cause me leve my condycions nor chaunge my lyfe, for I am not in that mynde to do no better than I have done hetherto, nor to amende for no man lyuyng." It was the costome of that lande, that on Whitsonyght the chyrche shold be watched, and tended with moche people, and theder cam Robert like a madman, and overthrowng al them that came in his waye ferynge nother God nor the Deuyll, and he was never styll of all the nyght, and in the mornynge whan it was day Robert was made knyght. Then this duke comaunded a tournament to be made in the which the said Robert wrought maystyes, and dyde meruaylous dedes of armes, in kyllynge and berynge downe hors and man, no man refusynge nor ferynge. Of some he brake armes and some legges, and bare them thorowe and kyled them out of hande; from hym went none unmarked in whiche iustynge Robert kyled x horses: the duke herynge how his sone myscheued

and mured all that came in his handes he went hymself into the tournament and comaunded upon a grete payne to sease and ren no more; then Robert rored for anger as he had ben wode and wolde not obeye his faders comaundement but abode styl in the fylde smytynge some that he kylled of the moste valiauntes that thether were comen to tournaye, than euery man cryed upon Robert to sease, but it auayled not, for he wolde not cease for no man, nor was there no man so bolde to encountre hym, for bycause that he was so stronge this Robert dyde so moche myschefe that all the people were in a rore, and assembled all with one assent in a grete angre and ranne to the duke complaynyng, saynge thus: "Lorde, ye be gretely to blame that ye suffre your sone to do as he dothe; we beseche yow for goddes sake to fynde some remedye for hym, to cause hym to sease or leue his mysrule."



HOW ROBERT THE DEUYLL RODE ABOUT
THE COUNTREE OF NORMANDY, ROBBYNGE,
STELYNGE, MORDERYNGE, AND BRENNYNGE
CHYRCHES, ABBAYES AND OTHER HOLY
PLACES OF RELYGYON, AND FORSYNGE OF
WOMEN, AND RAUYSHYNGE OF MAYDENS.



THAN whan Robert se there was no man more lefte in the felde, and that he coude do no more myschef there, than he toke his horse with the spores to seke his adventures, and began to do every day more harm than the other one, for he forsed and rauysshed maydens and wyues without nombre, he kylled murdred so moche people, that it was pyte, also he robbed chyrches, abbayes, hermytages, and fermes, there was not an abbaye in all the countrey but he robbed and pyllled them, these wycked dedes of Robert came to the eres of the good duke, and al they that were thus robbed and rebuked came to complayne of the grete outrage and suppressyon done by Robert, and styll was doynge thorowe out all the countree. One sayd, "My lorde youre sone hathe forsed my wyfe," another sayd, "he hath rauyshed my doughter," the other sayd, "he hath stolen my goodes, and robbed my hous;" and other sayd, "he hath wounded me to deth," with many semblable offences. Thus lay they greuously complaynyng before the good duke, that grete pyte it was there for to se the good duke herynge the greuous and lamentable complayntes of the great murdre done by Robert his sone, throughout all the lande of Normande. Than his herte was suppressed with so grete sorowe and thought that the salt téres breste oute of his eyen, and he wepte tenderly and sayd; "O ryght wyse God creatoure of heaven and erth, I haue so many tymes prayed ye to sende me a chylde and all my delyte was to haue a sone, to the entente that I myght of hym have grete joye, and solace. And now haue I one, the whiche doth my herte soo moche payne, sorowe and thought that I wote in no wyse what to begyn, nor doo, nor saye thereto, but good Lorde onely I crye upon the for helpe, and remedye to be a lytel released of my payne and sorowe."

HOW THE DUKE SENT OUT MEN OF ARMES
FOR TO TAKE ROBERT HIS SONE, WHICHE
ROBERTE TOKE THEM ALL, AND PUT OUT
THEYR EYEN IN DYSPYTE OF HIS FADER,
AND SENTE THEM SO HOME AGAYNE.



HERE was a knyght of the Dukes hous, whiche perceyued that this good duke was uery sorowfull and pensyfe, and knewe no remedy; then this knyght spake and sayd to hym: "My lorde, I wolde aduyse you to sende for your sone Robert and let hym be brought to your presence, and there before your nobles, and nexte frendes to rebuke hym, and than commaund hym to leue hys cursed lyfe, and yf he wyll not, ye to do justice upon hym as on a straunge man: hereto the duke consented, and thought the knyght gaue hym good counsell, and incontynent

he sente out mene to seke Robrt, and in ony wyse they to brynge hym to hys presence: this Robert, herynge of the complayntes made of all the people upon hym unto his fader, and that his fader had sent out men to take hym, wherefore all them that he coude gete, he put out theyr eyen, and so he toke the men that his fader sende for hym, and put out theyr eyen in despyte of his fader; and whan he had thus blynded his fader's seruauntes, he sayd to them in mockynge, "Syr, nowe shall ye slepe the better; go now home to my fader, and tell hym that I set lytel by hym, and bycause he sendeth you to brynge me to hym, therefore to his dyspyte I have put out your eyen." These poore seruauntes whiche the duke had sent for Robert his sone, came home with grete payne and in grete heuynesse saynge thus: "O good lorde se howe your sone Robert that ye dyde send us for hath arayed us, and blynded us." The good duke seyng his men in this case, he waxed very angry, and full of yre and began to compasse in his mynde how and by what meanes he myght come by to take Robert his sone.

HOW THE DUKE OF NORMANDY MADE A PROCLAMATION THROUGHOUT HIS LANDE, HOW MEN SHOLDE TAKE ROBERT HIS SONE, WITH AL HIS COMPANY, AND BRYNGE THEM EVERYCHONE TO PRYSON.

THAN spake a wyse lorde, sayinge thus, "my lorde take noo more thought for ye shall never se the day that Robert your sone wyll come in your presence in so moche, as he hath done so grete and greuouse offences to your comons, and your owne messengers that ye sende for hym; but it were of necessitie for you to correct and punyssh hym for hys grete offences, that he dayly doth, and hath done, for we fynde it wryten, that the lawe byndeth you thereto." The duke wyllynge to accomplyshe the councel of his lordes sende out messangers in all the hast, unto all the portes, good townes and barons, throughout all his dukedome commandynge on his behalfe all shryues, baylufes, or other offycers to doo theyr uttermoost dylygence to take Robert his sone prvsoner and to holde and kepe hym surely in pryson with all his company and affynyte. When Roberte herde of this proclamation, he with all his company were sore aferde of the dukes malyce and whan Robert se this he was almost out of his wyt for wode angre and wheted hys teeth lyke a bore, and swere a grete othe saynge thus, "that he wolde have open war with his fader, and subdewe and spyll all his lordshyppe."





HOW ROBERT MADE HYM A STRONG HOUS
IN A DARKE THYCKE WYLDERNES WHERE
HE WROUGHT MYSCHEFF WITHOUT COM-
PARYSON AND ABOUE AL MESURE OR NAT-
URAL REASON.

THEN whan Robarte herde and knewe of the
forsayd thynges, he lete make in a thycke
wylde foreste a stronge house, wherein he
made his dwellynge place, and this place
was wylde and strong, and more meter for wylde beestes,
than for any people to abyde in, and there Robert
assembled and gadered for his company, all the moost
myscheuouste and falsest theues that he coude fynde or
heere of in his faders lande, to wete morderers, theues,
streterobbers, rebelles, brenners of chyrches and houses,
forsers of women, robbers of chyrches, and the moost wyck-
este and curseste theues that were under the sone. Robert
had gadered to doo hym seruyce wherof he was Capytayne,
and in the forsayd wyldernes, Robert wyth his company
dyde so moche myschefe, that no tonge can tell, he mordred
marchauntes, and all that came by the waye, no man durst
loke out, nor come abroad for fere of Robert and his com-
pany, of whome every man was aferde, for they robbed all
the countree, in so moche, that no man durst loke out, but
they were kyllled of Robert or his men, also poore pelgremes
that went on pelgremage were murdered by Robert and his
company, in so moche, that euery man fledde from them,
lyke as the shepe fledde from the wolfe; for they were
as wolues warynge, sleyinge all that they coude come by,
and thus, Robert and his company ledde an ungracious lyfe;
also he was a grete glotten of etyng and drynkyng and
neuer fastyng, though it were neuer so grete a fastyng
daye. In Lente, or on Ymber dayes, he ete flesshe, as well
on Frydayes as on Sondays; but after he had done all this
myschefe, he suffred grete payne, an hereafter ye shal here.

HOW ROBERT THE DEUYLL KILLED VII HEREMITES.



IT befell upon a tyme that Robert, whiche euer imagyned and studyed in his mynde howe and by what meane he might doo moost myschefe and murdre, as he had ben ever accustomed before he rode out of his hous or theuyshe neste to seke his pray, and in the myddel of the wode he sawe vii hooly heremytes, to whome he rode as faste as he coulde with his swerde redy drawen, lyke a man oute of his mynde, and there he slewe this vii heremytes, the whiche were bolde and good men, but they were so vertuous and holy, that they suffred the marterdome for the loue of God. And whan he had slayne these vii devout men, he spake in mockage, and sayd: "I haue founde here a neste of a many pope holy horsons whome I haue shauen them crounes: I trowe they be dronke; they were wonte to kneke upon theyr knees, and now they lye upon theyr backes." There dyde Robert a cursed dede and blode shedyng, in despyte of God and holy chyrche; and after that he hadde done this myscheuous dede he rode out of the wode lyke a deuyll out of helle, semyng worse thenne wode, and his clothes were all dyed rede with the blode of the people that he had murdred and slayne, and thus arayed he rode ouer the feldes, and clothes, handes, face, all were rede of the blode of the holy heremytes, whiche he had so pyteously murdred in the wyldernesse.



HOW ROBERT THE DEUYLL RODE TO HIS
MODER THE DUCHESSE OF NORMANDYE,
BEYNGE IN THE CASTELL OF DARQUES:
SHE WAS COME TO A FESTE.

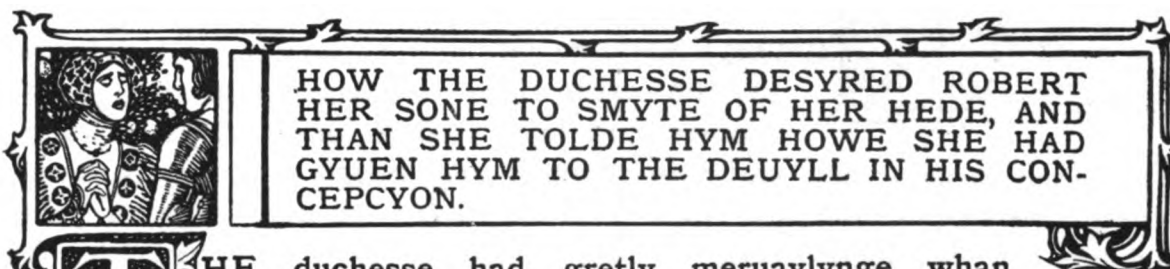


ROBERT rode so ferre and so longe, that he came to the castell of Darques; but he mette before with a shypherde which had tolde hym that his moder the duchesse sholde come of the sayd castell to dyner, and so he rode theder. But whan Robert came there, and the people se hym come, they ranne awaye frome hym, lyke the hare frome the houndes; one ranne and shette hym in hys house, an other ranne into the chyrche for fere. Robert seyng this, that all the people fled from hym for fere, he began to sygh in his herte, and sayd to hymself,—O! Almyghty God, how may this be, that every man thus fleeth from me! Nowe I perceyue that I am the moost myscheuouste and the moost cursèdest wretche of this worlde, for I sente better to be a Jewe or a Sarasyne, than any Crysten man, and I se wel that I am worste of all yll. Alas! sayd Robert the Deuyll, I may well hate and curse myne ungracyous and cursed lyfe, wherfore I am worthy to be hated of God and the worlde. In this minde and heuynesse came Robert to the castell gate, and lyghte downe from his horse, but there was no man that durste abyde about hym, nor come nyghe hym to holde his horse; and he hadde no seruante to serue hym, but let his horse stande there at the gate, and drewe out of his swerde, whiche was all blody, and incontynente toke the waye unto the halle, where the duchesse his moder was. Whan the duchesse sawe Robert her sonne come in this wyse, with a blody swerde in his hande, she was sore aferde, and wolde haue fledde a way frome hym, for she knewe wel his condycyons. Robert, seyng that euery body dyde flee from hym, and that his owne moder wolde haue fledde in lykewyse, he called unto her pyteously afarre, and sayd: "Swete lady moder, be not aferde of me, but stande styl tyl I haue spoken with you, and flee not from me in the worshyp of Crystes passyon." Than Roberte's herte beyng full of thought and repentaunce, wente nygher her, sayng thus: "Dere lady moder, I praye and requyre you tell me how and by what maner or wherby cometh it that I am soo vycyous



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and curste, for I knowe wel I haue it other by you or of my fader; wherefore incontynent I hertly desyre and praye you that ye shewe me the trouth hereof."



THE duchesse had gretly meruaylynge whan she herde her sone speke these wordes; and piteously wepynge, with a sorrowful herte saynge thus to hym: "My dere sone, I requyre you hertly that ye wyll smyte of my heed." This sayd the lady, for very grete pyte that she had upon hym, for bycause she had gyuen hym to the deuyll in his concepcyon. Robert answerde his moder with an hevy and a pyteous chere, saynge thus: "O! dere moder, why sholde I do so, that so moche myschefe have done, and this sholde be the worste dede that euer I dyde; but I praye you to shewe me that I desyre to wete of you." Then the duchesse, herynge his hertely desyre, tolde unto hym the cause why he was so vicious and full of myschefe, and how she gaue hym to the deuyll in his concepcyon, herselfe myspraysnge, sayd thus unto Roberte: "O! sonne, I am the moost unfortunate woman lyuyng, and I knowledge that it is all my faute that ye be soo cursed and wycked a leuer."





HOW ROBERT THE DEUYLL TOKE LEUE OF
HIS MODER.

ROBERT herynge his moders saynge he fell downe to the erthe into a swone, for very grete sorowe and laye styll a longe whyle, than he remeued agayne and came to hymself and began bytterly to wepe, and complayne, saynge thus. "The fendes of hell be with grete dylygence to applye theym to gete and haue my body and soule, but nowe from this tyme forthe, I forsake theym all theyr werke, and wyll neuer do more harme but good, and amende my lyfe and leue my synes and do penaunce therefore," than after this Robert spake to his moder, the whiche was in grete sorowe, and heynesse saynge thus: "O moost reuerente lady moder, I hertely beseche and requyre you that it wilde please you to haue me recommaunded unto my fader; for I wyll take the waye to Rome to be assoyled of my synnes, whiche are innumerable, and to abhomynable to recounte. Therefore I wyll neuer slepe one nyght there I slepe an other tyll I come at Rome, and god wyll."

HOWE ROBERT DEPARTED FROM HIS MO-
DER, AND RODE INTO THE WYLDERNESSE
WHERE HE FOUNDE HIS COMPANYE.



ROBERT in grete haste lyght upon his horse and rode to the wode where he had lefte his companye the whiche he founde. The duchesse made grete lamentacyon for her sone Robert, whiche had taken his leue of her, and sayd many tymes to herselfe, "Alas what shall I do for it is all my faute that Roberte my sone hath done so moche myschefe:" and in the meane whyle that the duchesse made this sorowe and bewayllynge for her sone Roberte in came the duke into the chambre, and as soone as she sawe hym she began to tell hym of his sone Roberte pyteously wepynge; shewynge hym what he had sayd and done, than the good duke axed whether Robert were disposed to leue his vycyous lyfe, and yf he were sorry for his grete offences, "Ye my lorde" sayd she, "he is sore repentaunce:"

then began the Duke sore to sygh, and sayd, "Alas it is all in vayne, that Robert thynketh to do, for I here he shall neuer have power to make restytycyon of the hurtes and harmes the whiche he hathe doone in his lyfe, but I beseche Almyghty God to prolonge his lyfe, and sende hym a respyte that he may amende his lyfe, and do penaunce for his synnes."



HOW ROBERT THE DEUYLL TOLDE HIS
COMPANY HE WOLDE GOO TO ROME FOR
TO BE ASSOYLED OF HIS SYNNES.

NOW is Robert come agayne to his companye whiche he founde syttyng at dyner, and whan they sawe hym they rose up and dyde hym reuerence; than Robert began to rebuke theym for theyr vycyous lyuyng sayyng thus, "My welbeloued felowes, I requyre you in the reuerence of God, that ye wyll herken, and take hede to this that I shall shewe you, ye knowe well how that we haue ledde hetherto an ungracyous and moost uycyous lyfe, robbed and pyllled chyrches, forced women, rauysshed maydens, robbed and kylled marchauntes. We have robbed and kylled nonnes, holy aunkers, preestes, clerkes, and many other people without nombre haue we mured and robbed, wherefore we be in the waye of endles dampnacyon, except that God haue mercy upon us. Wherefore I requyre you everychone for goddes sake that ye wyll chaunge your opynyon, and leue your abhomynable synnes, and do penaunces therefor, for I wyll goo to Rome to be shryuen and to haue penaunce for my synnes." When Robert thus had sayd, one of the theues rose and sayd to his companye in mockage, "Nowe Syrs, take hede the foxe wyll be an aunker for he begynneth to preche, Robert mocketh fast with us, for he is our captayne, and doth more harme alone than all we do, how thynke ye wyll he be longe thus holy." Yet sayd Robert, "Gentyll felawes I praye you for goddes sake leue your condycyons, and thynke on oure soule, and do penaunce for your moost fellest stynkyng synnes, and crye upon oure lorde for mercy and forgeueneess, and he wyl

forgeue you." Whan Robert had sayd thus, than spake to hym one of the theues and sayd, "I praye you mayster be in pease, for it auayleth not what ye saye, ye do but spende your tyme in wast, for I nor my companye wyll not amende our lyfe for no man lyuyng." And all his companye commended his saynge, and sayden all with one voyce, "He sayth trewe, for and we sholde dye, we wyll not leue our olde condycyons and cursed lyfe, but and yf we haue done moche hurte hetherto we wyll do moche more hereafter."

HOW ROBERT THE DEUYLL KYLLED ALL
HIS COMPANYE.



ROBERT herynge the faste and wycked opynyon and myscheuous purpose of his company waxed angry, and thought yf they remayne and abyde styll here, they wyl doo grete myschefe and murdre, but he wente preuely unto the dore and shyte it fast, and gate a grete staffe and layde one of the theues on the hede that he fell downe deed to the erth. And so he serued one after an other, tyll he hadde kyllled them everychone, thenne sayd he thus to them, "Syr, I haue rewarded you after your deserte, and by cause ye have done me good seruyse, I haue gyuen you good wages, for whosouer serueth a good mayster he is lyke to haue good wages." Whan Robert thus had done he wolde have brente the hous, but he consydered the grete good that was therin, wherfore he let it stande, shytte faste the dores about and locked them, and brought awaye the keye with hym to his faders.





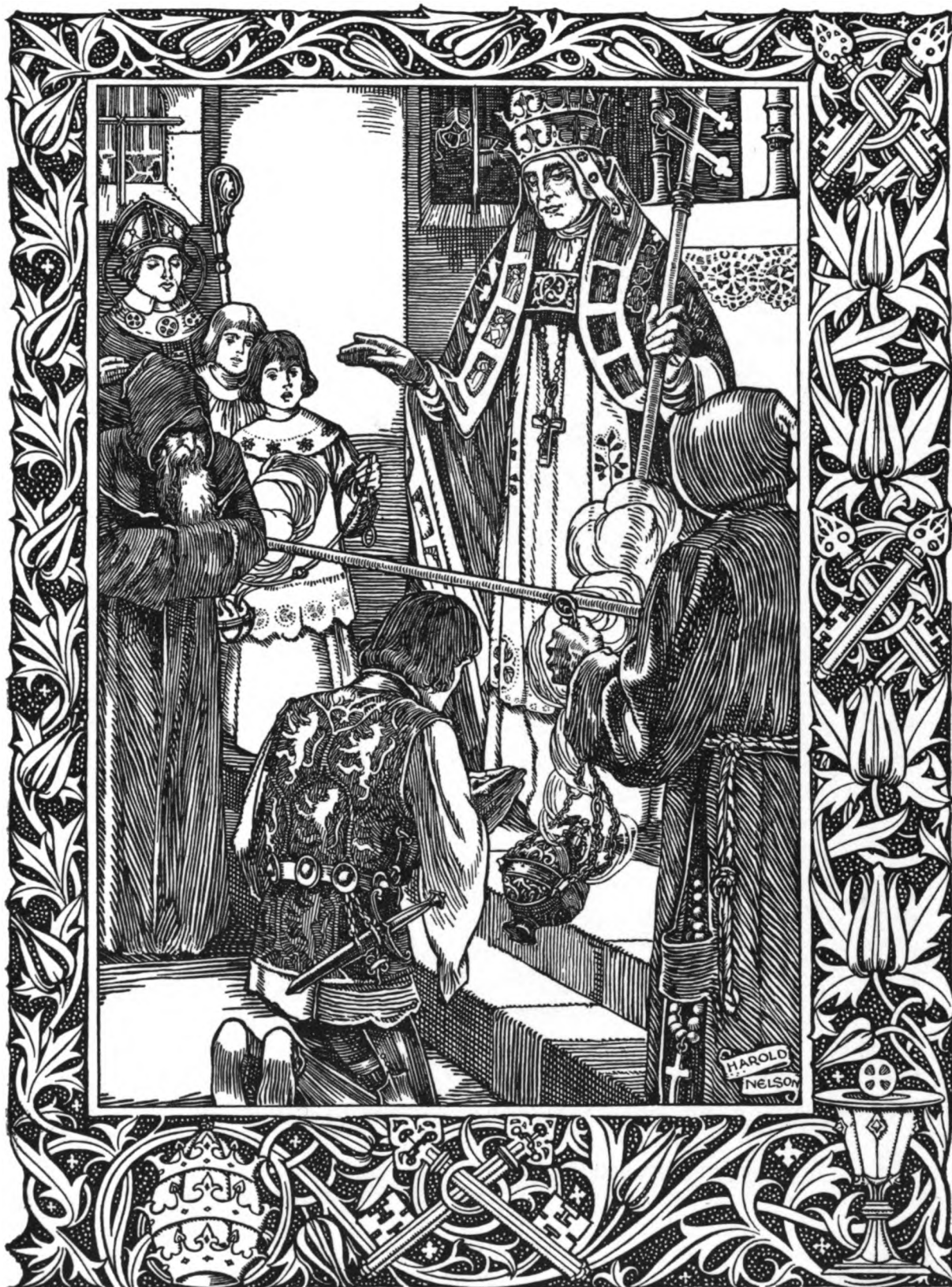
HOW ROBERT THE DEUYLL SENTE THE
KEYE OF HIS CHEFE HOUS OR THEUYSSHE
LODGYNGE TO HIS FADERS THE DUKE OF
NORMANDYE, AND HOW HE WENTE TO
ROME.



THAN whan Robert had done all that said is, he tooke up his hande and blessed hym, and rode through the forest the neere waye to Rome. Robert rode that daye so long tyll that the nyght came on, and was passynge sore and hongred, for he had eten no mete of all that daye, and fortunèd to come rydynge by an Abbaye, whyche he had many tymes robbed, and the abbote was his kynnessman, and Robert rode in to this abbaye and sayd neuer a worde, but whan the monkes se Robert come they were aferde, and ranne awaye, saynge one to another, "Here cometh the ungracyous Robert, the Deuyll hath brought him hether." Whan Robert herde this, and se them all renne awaye frome him, than his sorowe begun to renewe, and sayd in himself, in sore syghynge and sorowfull herte: "I may well hate my cursed lyfe, for euery man fleeth from me, and I haue spent my tyme ungracyously, and in euyll and cursed werkes," and there withall he rode streyght in the chyrche dore and a lyghte done from his horse, deuoutely sayinge his prayers to God in this wyse. "O Lord Jhesu I moost synfull wretche and vessell of all stynkynge synnes. I praye the that thou wylte haue mercy on me and preserue and kepe me from all daungers and peryll." And then he wente and spoke to the abbote and monkes so swetely and so peteously and amyably that they began to go towarde hym, to whom Roberte sayd peteously, wepyng knelyng on his knees. "My lorde I knowledge myself that I haue greuously offended you, and haue grete harme and injurie unto your abbay. Wherefore I requyre and praye you in all the honoure of Crystes passyon of forgyuenesse." And than he spake to the Abbote in thys wyse, "My Lorde abbott I praye you hertely haue me recomaunded to my lorde my fader the duke of Normandye, and delyuer hym this keye of the chefe hous where I haue dwelled with my companye, the whiche I haue all slayne to thentent that they sholde do no more harme, and in the hous lyeth all the goodes and

tresoure that I haue stolen from you and other men, wherfore I am ryght sory, and I beseeche you of forgyuenesse, and I pray you that this good may be rendred agene unto such people as they haue belongynge to before." Robert abode that nyght in the abbay, but in the mornynge erly he wente thens and left behinde hym his horse and his swerde where withall he had doone grete myschefe. And so he went alone towards Rome. And on the same daye rode the Abbote to the Duke of Normandy, and gaue hym the keye that Robert had delyuered hym, and told the duke how he was gone to Rome. Than the duke gaue all the poor people theyr goodes agen that they lost befor as ferre as it coude be founde in the hous. We wyll sease of the Duke and the Abbott, and speke of Robert whiche goth to Rome warde alone, with grete devocyon.



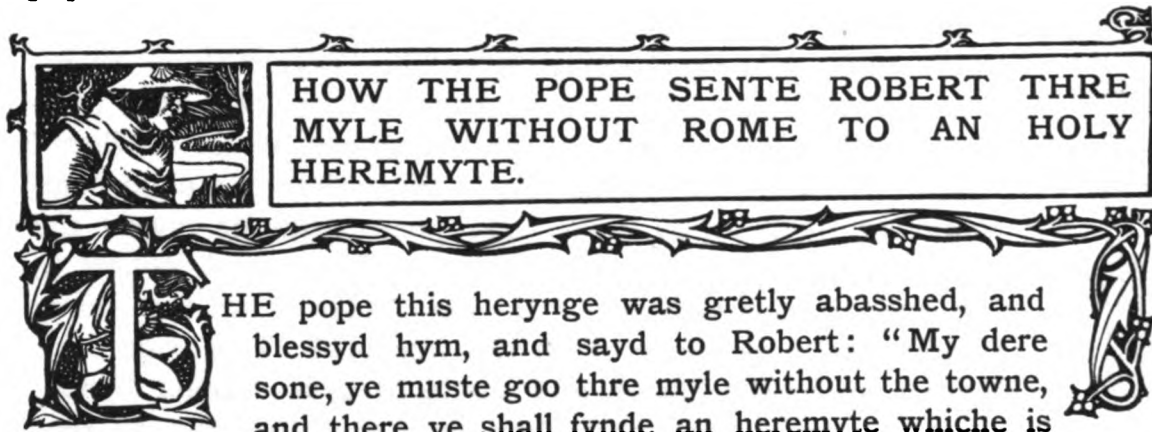


HOW ROBERT CAME TO ROME FOR REMYS-
SYON OF HIS SYNNE.

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ROBERT went so longe ouer hylles and dales alone, tyll at last with grete payne and pouerte he came to Rome in to the cyte, upon a shere Thursdaye at nyght, and on the Frydaye after, the pope hymselfe sayd the deuyne seruyce, as the custom was in saynt Peter's chyrche; and Robert presed fast to have comen to the pope, but the pope's seruantes se that Robert presed so sore to come to the pope, they smote hym, and bad hym goo back; but the more they smote hym, the more he presed and thronge to gette nygh the pope, and so at last he gate to hym, and fell doune on his knees at the feet of the pope, cryenge with a loud voyce, saynge thus: "O! holy fader, haue mercy on me!" and thus laye Robert cryenge longe, whyle the people that were by the pope were angry that Robert made suche a noyse, and wolde haue dryuen hym thens, but the pope seyng Robert's grete desyre, had pyte upon hym, sayd to the people, "Late hym alone, for in all that I can se he hath grete deuocyon." Wherefore the pope commaunded them all to holde their pease, that he myght the better here and understande Robert. Then sayd Robert to the pope in this manner: "O! holy fader, I am the moost and the greteste syner of all the worlde!" The pope toke Robert up by the hande, and sayde to hym: "Good frende, what is your desyre, and what eleth you to make all this noyse?" Than sayd Robert: "O! holy fader, I beseche you to here my confessyon, for I be not by you assoyled, I am dampned worlde withouten ende, for it is meruayle

that the deuyll bere me not awaye body and soule, seyng the foule innumerable synne that I am laden and bounden withall more than ony man lyuynge; and in soo moche that ye are he that gyueth helpe and comforte to them that haue nede, therefore I humbly besече you for the passyon of our Lorde Jhesu Cryst to here and purge me of my abhomynable synnes, wherby I am deceued and departed from al the joyes of heuen, and I am wors than a Jewe." The pope herynge this, demed and thought in hymselfe whether this were Robert the Deuyll, and axed hym, "Sone, be ye Robert the whiche I haue herde so moche spekyng of, the whiche is worst of all men." Than Robert answered and sayd, "Ye." Than the pope sayd: "I wyll assoyle you, but I conjure you in the name of God that ye do no man harme." The pope and all that were aboute hym were aferde to loke upon Robert. Robert fell on his knees with great deuocyon and repentaunce of hys synnes, saynge, "Holy fader, nay as longe as I lyue I promyse God and his blessed moder I wyll neuer hurte Crysten creature." Than incontynent the pope toke Robert aparte, and herde his confessyon, to whome Robert shrowe him deuoutly, shewynge how his moder had gyuen hym to the deuyll in his concepcon, wherof the pope was sore aferde.



my goostly fader, and to hym ye shall confesse you, and saye that I sende you to hym, and he shall asoyle you." Robert answered the pope: "I wyll go with a good wyll;" and toke his leue of the pope saynge, "God gyue me grace to do that may be to the helth of my soule." Soo that nyght Robert abode in Rome, for it was late, and in the mornynge erly Robert went out of Rome towarde the place where he sholde fynde the heremyte; and so he wente so longe ouer hylles and dales with grete desyre to be shryuen of his synnes, and at last he came where

the heremyte dwelled, whereof he was glad, and came to the heremyte and tolde hym how the pope had sent hym theder to be confessed of hym. Than the heremyte sayd he was hertly welcome; and within a whyle Robert began to confesse and shewe his synne, and fyrst he shewed the heremyte how his moder had gyuen hym to the deuyl in his concepcyon; and how he smote the chyldren in his youth or he coude goo alone; and how he kylled his scole master; and how many knyghtes he kylled at the iustynge whan his fader made hym knyght; and he rode thorowe his fader's lande, robbynge and stelynge, forsynge of women, rauysynge of maydens; and how he thrust out the eyen of his fader's men in despyte of hym; and how he had kylled vii heremytes; and shortly shewed hym all the offences that euer he dyde, sethen the houre of hys byrth tyll that tyme, wherof the heremyte had maruayle, but he was glad that Robert was repentaunt for hys synnes. Whan Robert had thus confessed hym, the heremyte sayd to hym: "Sone, thys nyght ye shall abyde here, and to morrowe I shall gyue good counsell of that ye haue to do." Robert that was so curst and myscheuous, ferful cruel, and proude as a lyon, is now as gentyll and curteys, and swete of wordes, and wyse in hys dedes, as euer was ony duke or prynce lyuynge. Then Robert was soo wery and ouercome with goynge, that he coude nother ete nor drynke, but went aparte and sayd his prayers to Almighty God, prayenge hym thrughe his indeles mercy, that he wolde kepe hym from the fendes temptacyon and deceyte, the heremyte made Robert to lye that nyght in a lytell chapell that stode nye his celle, and the heremyte prayed all the nyght to our lorde for Robert, whiche sawe that he hadde grete repentaunce for his synnes, and thus prayenge the heremyte fell a sleep.





HOW GOD SENT AN AUNGELL TO THE
HEREMYTE TO SHEWE HYM THE PEN-
AUNCE THAT HE SHOLDE GYUE TO
ROBERT FOR HIS SYNNE.

THE heremyte being thus a slepe, ther cam to hym an aungell, saynge to hym in this wyse: "Holy fader, here and take hede of the message that God commaundeth the; yf that Robert wyll be shryven of his synnes, he must kepe and counterfete the wayes of a fole, and be as he were dombe; and he may ete no maner of mete, but that he can take it from the dogges; and in this wyse, without spekyng, and counterfetyng the fole, and no thyng etyng but what he can take from the dogges, must he be tyll tyme that it please God to shewe hym that his synne be forgyuen;" and with this vycyon the heremyte awoke out of his slepe, and began to remembre hymselfe of this that sayd is, and thanked our Lorde of his message done to hym. And whan the day began to apere, the heremyte called Robert unto hym, with fare and comfortable wordes saynge to hym, "My frende, come hether to me;" and incontynent Robert came to hym with grete deuocyon, hym confessyng. And whan Robert had shryuen him, the heremyte sayd thus unto hym: "Sone, I thought and aduysed me of the penance that ye shall haue, to get remyssyon of your synnes, in whiche ye gretly offended ayenst God, that is to wete ye must counterfayte and playe the fole; and ye may ete no mete but that ye can take it from the dogges whan men gyue them ought; also you must

kepe you dombe without speche, and lye among dogges, for thus hath God thys nyght commaunded me by a aungell to gyue you this for your penaunce, and ye may offende no man the whyle your penaunce be a doynge; and this penaunce ye must doo for your synnes in maner and forme as I haue tolde you, tyll suche tyme as it shall please your Lorde to sende you worde that your synnes be forgyuen." Robert beyng mery and glad, thankynge our Lorde that he was assoyled of his synnes, and had therefore so lyght penaunce as hym thought that it was. Nowe taketh Robert leue of the heremyte, and goth to do his sharpe penaunce, whiche he helde but lyghte, remembryng his grete abhomynable stynkyng synnes that he hath done all the dayes of his lyfe; this was a fayre myracle, for he that was so vycyous and so furyous a rebell, and proude a synner, is now so full of uertues and fayre condycyons and tame as a lambe.

HOW ROBERT THE DEUYLL TOKE LEUE OF THE HEREMYTE, AND WENT AGAYNE TO ROME TO DO HIS PENAUENCE THAT THE HEREMYTE HAD GYUEN HYM.



ROBERT had taken leue of the heremyte, and is gone towarde Rome, there for to do his penaunce. And whan he came into the cyte he began to lepe and renne about the stretes, makynge hymselfe as he had ben a fole, and the chyl dren in the stretes se Robert renne in this wyse, and they after hym shoutynge and cryenge and castynge with myre and derte, and all suche fylth as they founde in the stretes, and the burgeyses of the cyte laye in theyr wyndowes and laughed and mocketh with Robert. Than whan Robert had thus played the fole in Rome a certayne season, he came on a tyme to themperour's courte and se the gate dyde stande open and came streyght into the hall, and there jetted up and downe from the one syde to the other, somtyme he went faste and somtyme softely and than he hopped and ran and other whyle stode styll, but he stode not longe in one place. The emperour seyng Robert thus playenge the fole, he sayd to one of his seruantes, se yonder is a fayre fauoured yonge man, me thynke he is out of his mynde, the whiche is grete damage, for he is

fayre and a well made man, go and gyue hym mete. This emperour's
 seruaunte dyde as he was commaunded, and called Robert to hym
 and wolde have gyuen hym some mete, but Robert nolde ete nor
 drynke, and whyle Robert sate thus at the table, the emperour sawe
 one of his houndes whiche was bytten with an other dogge, wherefore,
 themperour cast hym a bone, and the dogge caught the bone and
 began to gnawe there on, and Robert seyng that lept from the table
 and toke it from hym, but the dogge fought with Roberte for the
 bone, and helde faste the one ende, and Robert the other ende, but
 Robert se it wolde be no better, but set him downe on the grounde,
 and gnewe on the one ende of the bone and the dogge on the other;
 themperour and they that loked there on laughed at Robert and the
 dogge, but Robert dyde so moche that he gate the bone alone, and
 laye and gnewe it for he was sore enhongred; themperour seyng
 that Robert was so sore enhongred he caste to an other dogge an
 hole lofe, but Robert toke it from hym and brake an two peces and
 gaue the dogge half, for bycause he gate it for the dogges sake,
 themperour seyng this lough there at and sayd to his seruauntes;
 "we haue here nowe the moste foolysse fole, and the verayst nedy
 that euer I sawe, for he taketh the dogges mete from them, and
 eteth it himself, ther by a man may perfytely knowe that he is a
 natural fole;" all that were in the hall gaue the dogges as moche
 mete as they might ete, to thentent that Robert myght fyll his belye
 with them, and whan he had fylled his belly whyle he rose up and
 walked up and downe in the hall with a staffe in his hande, smytynge
 upon stoles and benches lyke as and yf he had ben a very innocent
 fole. And thus walkynge he loked on euery syde, and sawe a dore
 where men wente in to a fayre gardyne in the whiche gardyne there
 stode a fayre fontayne or well, and theder went Robert to drynke, for
 he was euyl a thurst, and whan nyght came on Robert folowed the
 forsayd dogge where soo euer he wente, the whiche was accustomed
 to lye euery nyght under a steyre, and there he wente and layde him
 downe and Robert followed hym under the steyre and layde hym downe
 by the dogge, themperour seyng this, had compassyon on Robert and
 commaunded that men sholde bere hym a bedde, that he myghte lye
 there upon to slepe; anone two seruantes brought Robert a bedde
 to slepe there on, but he poynted to bere it awaye ayene, for he had
 leuer to lye upon the floure and colde erth, than upon a softe bedde,
 whereof themperour had grete meruayle, and commaunded that men

sholde bere hym clene strawe, whiche they dyde, than Robert whiche was feynte and wery of goynge, layde hym downe to slepe on the strawe. Now haue this in your myndes, ye proude hertes and synners thynke on Roberts grete penaunce and wylfull pouerte, and how he so grete a gentylman borne, forsoke his fader and his moder, and all his frendes, and his countree and lande, and all his dylycate metes and drynkes, and gaue raymentes and worldely pleasure, with all that of suche a state aperteyneth, how wyllyngly he hathe all forsaken for the saluacyon of his soule, and is gone out of a duke's bedde to a dogges canell, and with dogges he ete and dranke and slepte and rose whan they rose, and in this penaunce lyued Robert vii yeres or there aboute, and the dogge that he comunly slept with all perceyued that he foure the better, and had more mete for Robert's sake, than he was wonte to haue before, and that no man dyde bete hym for his sake, wherfore he began to loue Robert passynge well in so moche men myghte as soone haue kyllled hym as dryuen hym from Robert.





HOW ROBERT MADE A JEW TO KYSSE
HIS DOGGES ARSE AT THE EMPEROUR'S
TABLE.

IT befell upon a tyme that themperoure helde a grete feste in his palays in the cyte of Rome, to whiche feste were assembled al the chefe of the lande, amonge whome there was a Jewe whiche was receyuer of the moost part of all themperour's landes, and whan euery man was set at the table Robert walked up and doune in the hall hauynge his dogge in his armes playnge the sole as he was wonte to doo, and thus came to the table behynd the forsayd Jewe, whiche was set at the emperours table, and Robert came behynde his backe and knocked hym on the sholder, the Jewe lefte hym and tourned his face shortely behynde hym, and Robert hadde up his dogges arse redy and sette it upon the Jewe's face. The emperour and his lordes this seyng, laughed and had good game thereat, but the Jewe was wroth, and foule ashamed, but he durst saye nothyng at the tyme. Than Robert sette downe his dogge and incontynente the dogge lepte upon the table, and dyde soo moche with his mouth and fete, that he caste doune all the mete under the table. And in this maner Roberte spent his tyme euen without spekyng, lyke as the heremyte had commaunded hym, and euer he dyde some madde or merry conceyte to cause the emperour to laughte or be mery.

HOW ROBERT THREWE DOWNE A BRYDE
ON A FOULE DONGEHYLL, AND HOW HE
PUT A LYUYNGE CATTE IN AN HOLE SET-
HYNGE POTTE WITH PODRED BEFE.



T besel upon a tyme that there was a bryde
sholde goo to chyrche to be wedded,
whiche was gayly apparelled, as unto a
bryde apperteyned; Robert seyng this
bryde thus gayly arayed, toke her by the
hande and ledde her thorough a passynge
foule donge hyll, and there made her fall
and fouled her gaye araye, and than he ranne lyghtly
awaye shoutynge and laughynge, and ranne unto the
brydes kytchen where her dyner was appereyled and caughte
a lyuyng catte and caste her in the potte of pouldred befe.
The whiche incontynente was tolde to themperoure, where at
he and all his lordes laughed, and had grete game there
at, and they loued Robert passynge well, for he made
moche myrth without harme.

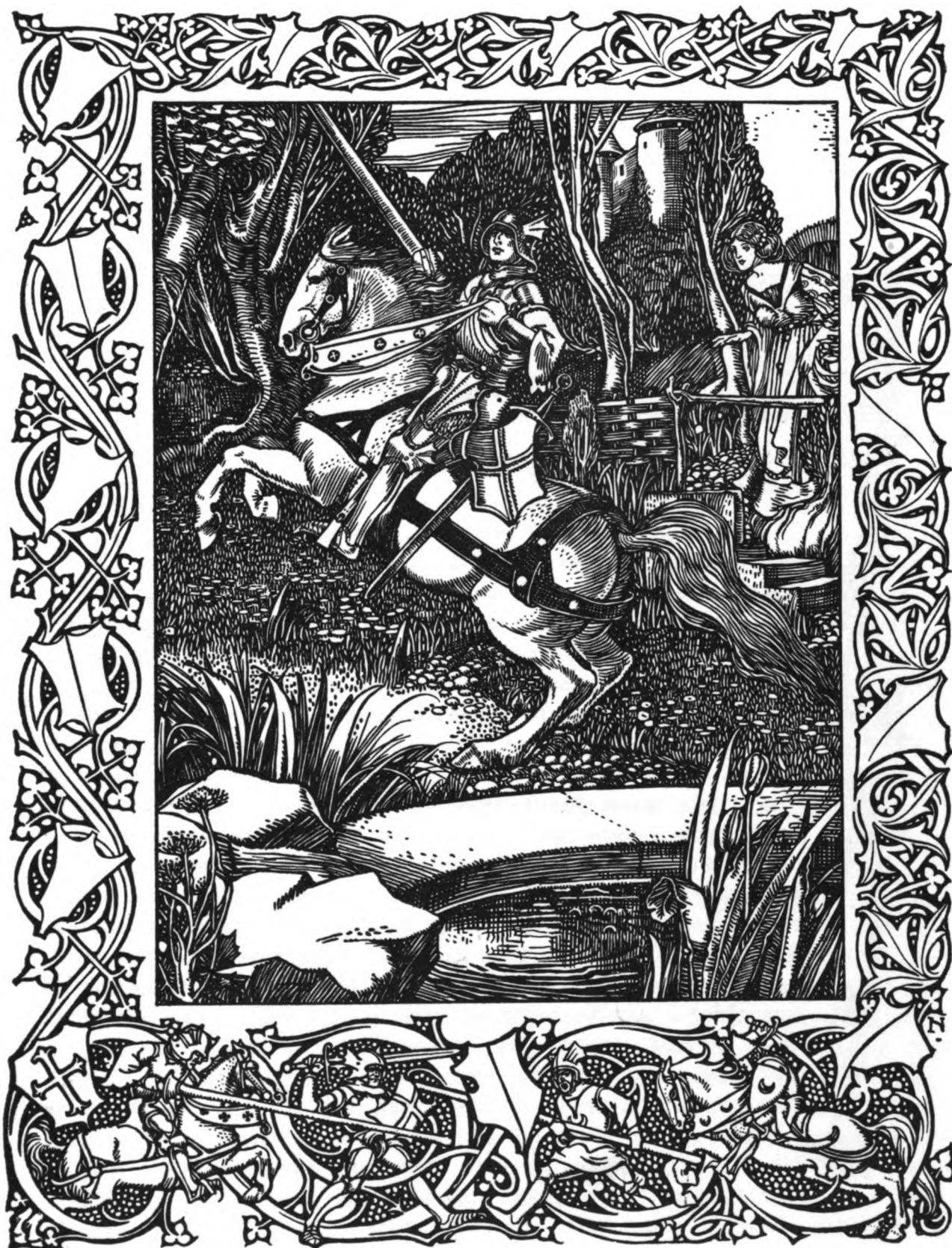


HOW THE SENESCHALL HAD GADRED A GRETE ARMYE OF MEN OF WARRE OF SARESYNs, AND LAYDE SYEGE TO ROME, BY CAUSE THE EMPEROURE WOLDE NOT GYUE HYM HIS DOUGHTER IN MARYAGE.



IN the meane season whyle Robert was thus in Rome doyng his penaunce as a forsayd, which dured seuen yeres or there about in the emperoure's courte, the whiche emperour had a fayre doughter, but she was borne domb and neuer spoke, and the emperours senesshal dyuerse tymes had desyred his doughter

in maryage of the emperoure, but he wolde neuer graunte hym her, wherfore the senesshall was gretly moued and angry therwith themperoure, for he thoughte he myght haue wonne of hym his empyre by force, and myght, in soo moche the seneschall came upon a tyme with a grete hoost of Sarasyns, and layde syege to the cyte of Rome, wherof the emperour had grete maruayle and wondred, than the emperour gadred and assembled all the lordes barons askinge of them counsell, saynge thus, "My lordes, gyue me good counseyl that we may withstande this Hethen dogges whiche haue layde syege here to our cyte, wherfore I take grete thought for they kepe all my lande under theyr subieccyon and they wyll brynge us to confusyon yf that God out of his endles mercy helpe us not, wherfore I praye you euerychone to go fyght with them with all our power and myght and dryue them awaye;" than answered the lordes and knyghts all with one assent saynge, "Souerayne lorde your counseyl is good and wyse, wherfore we be all ready to goo with you and gyue them batayle and defende our ryght bothe lande and cyte." The emperour thanked them of this answeare and was glad therof, and made proclamacyon throughout all his landes and cytees that eury man olde and younge that were able to bere armes sholde make them redy to fyght ayenst theyr moost cruell enmyes the Sarasyns which were come into his lande, and contynent whan this proclamation was done amonge the comyns euery man was wyllynge and redy to go with themperour to fyght and defende theyr ryght, and so they went forth in a fayre ordynaunce



with themperour to fyght upon theyr mortall enmyes the Hethen dogges. And for all that themperour had moche mo people than the seneschall, yet the seneshall had wonne the felde, hadde not God of his grace sente theder Robert to resyste and helpe the Romaines in theyr grete necessitye.

HOW OUR SAUYOUR JHESU HAUYNGE COMPASSYON
ON THE CRYSTEN BLODE, SENT ROBERT BY AN AUN-
GELL A WHYTE HORSE AND HARNEYS, COMMAUND-
YNGE HYM TO GO RESCUE AND HELPE THE ROMAYNS
AYENST THE ETHEN DOGGES THE SARASYNS.



THE emperour and the Romaines went to the batayle as sayd is ayenst the Sarasyns, and Robert was at home, where he was accostomed to walke in the gardyne to a fountayne or well to drynke, and this was on the same daye that themperour with his hoste sholde gyue batayle ayenst the Sarasyns: than came there, a uoyce oute of Heuen sente from our Lorde, saynge in this maner. "Robert, God commaundeth you, by me, that ye incontynent arme you with this harneys, and lyght upon this horse that God hath sente you, and ryde in all the hast possyble and rescue the emperour and his people." Robert herynge the commaundement of God was abasshed in his mynde, and durst not do ayenst goddes commaundement, but in contynent he armed hym and lepte on the hors without tarynge and rode his waye. The emperour's doughter whiche I tolde you of before, stode at a wyndowe and sawe Robert thus armed on horsbacke, than if she coude haue spoken she wolde haue tolde it, but she coude not speke for she was dombe, but she remembred and bare it surely in her mynde. Robert thus horst and harnayst, rode into themperours hoost whiche he sawe sore ouer pressed with theyr enmyes the Turkes, in so moche, that had not God and Robert rescued

them, the crysten had ben all slayne, but whan Robert was come into the hoost he put him in the moost prese of the Turkes and faughte and layde on eche syde on these cursed houndes; there a man myght haue sene armes, legges, hedes tomble on the grounde, both horse and man that neuer rose after: it was a worlde to se the murdre that Robert dyde amonge the dampned dogges the Sarasyns; so to make shorte tale, Robert dyde so moche, that the Sarasyns were constrayned to flye awaye and themperour helde the felde and had the vycторыe of them.



HOW ROBERT TURNED AGAYNE TO THE FOR-
SAYD FOUNTAYNE, AND THERE UNARMED
HYM, WHAN HE HAD THUS SUBDUED AND
VAYNQUYSSHED THE SARASYNs AND PUT
THEM TO FLYGHT.

OW hath the emperour gotten the felde and the honoure, thanked be God, and Robert is torned agayne to the sayd fountayne, and there unarmed hym and layde the harneys on the hors, whiche incontynent was vanyshed awaye that no man coude knowe nor perceyue where he become; and Robert bode styll standynge by the fountayne. Themperour's doughter seynge this had grete meruayll of this, and wolde haue tolde it forth but she was dombe and coude no speke. Robert had a race in his face, whiche he gotte in the batayll, but he was none otherwyse hurte; the emperour was glad, and thanked God of his victory ayenst the false dogges the Sarasyns; and thus beyng mery, he came home to his palays; and whan they were all set to dynner, Robert presented hymselfe before themperour as he was wonte to do, playnge the fole, and makynge hym dombe as afore rehersed is; the emperour reioysed in hymselfe whan he se Robert, for he loued hym well; and whan he perceyued Robert's hurte in his face, and thought that some of his seruauntes had hurte hym whyle he was out, wherfore he was angry, and said: "Here in this court be some enuyous men, for whyle we haue ben out at batayle, they haue beten and hurte this poore innocent creature in his face, which is

grete synne, for though he be a fole he dooth no man harme." So themperour commaunded them all upon a grete payne that no man sholde doo hym harme, yf they dyde they sholde be punysshed, that all other sholde be ware by them. Than the emperoure began to axe his knyghtes yf there were any of them that coude telle of the knyght with the whyte hors that came preuely in to the felde, and so valyauntely rescued them, themperour's daughter this herynge poynted themperour her fader that it was Robert; but the emperour understode not what his daughter mente whan she poynted, for she coude not speke, wherfore he called her maystres to hym, and axed her what his daughter mente by her poyntyng, and her maystres answered and sayd: "Your daughter menes by her poyntyng that this day ye haue gotten the batayll and vycторыe thurgh the helpe of your fole Robert, and the race that is in his face he hath gotten it in the batayll." The emperour understandyng the mynde and intent of his daughter, he was angry and sayd to her maystres: "Ye sholde teche and lerne my daughter wysdome, and no folye ne peusnesse wherewithall I am myscontent." The daughter seyng that her fader was angry, pointed no more, notwithstanding she wist well that it was trewe that she poynted and mente, for in as moche as she had sene the aungell bryng hym the hors and harneys. This remayned in this wyse a certayne season, and after that the Sarasyns were put to flyght by the Romaines, as sayd is, yet came the senesshall agayne with moche more company, and layde syege to Rome; and the Romaines sholde haue lost the felde ayen, had not the knyghte on the whyte horse bene, to whome God sent hors and harnays as he had done before. To make shorte tale, this knyghte dyde so moche that the Sarasyns were put to flyght, and the Romaines won the felde and vycторыe as they dyde before. There were some of the emperour's meyny layde wayte where this knyght became, but as soone as the batayle was done he was gone no man coude tell were he was become, saue only the emperour's daughter whiche se hym at the fountayne agayne unarmyng hym.



HOW ROBERT GATTE THE THYRDE BATAYLE
AS HE DYDE BEFORE WHICH SHE KEPTE
SECRETE.



LN a short tyme after this the senesshall tourned agayne with a moche greter power than he had before, and layde syege to Rome; and yet the emperour rode to the batayle, he commaunded his knyghtes and barones to take good hede fro whens that knyght came with the whyte horse, and what he was and where he became, for he had grete desyre to knowe what he was. The knyghtes answered it sholde be done. The day came that they must ryde forth to the batayle, and sertayne of the best knyghtes rode pryuely into a wood that stode a lytell there besyde, and there they wayted whiche waye the knyghte on the whyte horse sholde come to the batayle; but they loste theyr laboure, for they coude not tell whens he come. But whan they sawe hym in the batayle, they rode towarde hym to helpe hym and receyue hym. This same batayle was sore foughten on bothe partyes, but the Sarasyns lost there courage, for Robert layde on soo grete and myghty strokes, that no man myght stande under his hande; so that in conclusyon Roberte dyde so moche and so valyantly, that the Sarasyns were put to the dyscomfytur wherof themperour was gretly enioyed; the senesshall with the Sarasyns were passynge angry and sore moued therwith all.



HOW ONE OF THE EMPEROUR'S KNYGHTES
HURTE ROBERT IN HIS THYGHE WITH A
SPERE.



THAN whan this batayle was done, euery man rode home, and Robert wolde haue tourned agayne to the fountayne to unarme hym as he was wonte to do before, but the forsayd knyghtes were torned agayne to the wood, to awayte for the knyght with the whyte hors; and whan they sawe hym come, they rode all at ones out of the wood, and cryed with a loud voyce saynge unto hym: "O noble knyght, tary and speke with us, who that ye be, and whens and out of what lande ye come, to the entent that we may shewe it to the emperour, whiche specyally he desyreth for to knowe." Robert this herynge was sore ashamed, and smote his whyte hors with his sporres, flyngyng ouer hylles and ouer valleyes, for bycause he wolde not be knownen; but there followed hym a bolde knyght, well horsed, with a spere wenyng to haue kyllid his whyte horse, but he myste, and smote Robert in the thyghe with his spere, and the spere heed brake of and stacke styll in his thyghe, but yet for all this he coude gete no knowlege of the knyght with the whyte horse, for he rode from them all euerychone, whereof they were passyng sory. Robert rode so sore, tyll at the laste he came unto the fountayne and unarmed hym, and layde the harnays on the horse as he hadde done before, whiche in contynente was vanysshed awaye and gone; and he drewe out the spere hed out of his thyghe, and hyd it bytwene two grete stones by the fountayne; than he layde grece and mosse upon his wounde, for he durst let no man loke thereto, for fere he sholde haue ben knownen. And all this sawe and marked the emperour's doughter; for bycause she se that Robert was a fayre and well fauoured yonge knyght, she began to cast her loue unto hym. And whan Robert hadde dressed his wounde, he came in to the halle, to gete hym some mete, and he halted as lytell as he coude, and kept it secretly, that almoost no man coude perceyue it, and suffred moore payne a thousande tymes than it semeth by hym. Shortly

after this, came home the knyght that had hurte Robert, and began to recounte to themperour how the knyght with the whyte horse had outryden hym, and how he had hurte hym sore ayenst his wyll, and sayd to the emperour: "I beseche you, my lorde emperour, here what I shall tell you, and in what maner ye shall knowe who is he that hath holpen you; it is best ye make a proclamacyon and publyshe thrugheout your empyre, and yf there be ony knyght in whyte harnays and a whyte horse that he be brought to your presence, and that he brynge with hym the spere-heed where withall he was hurte in his thyghe, shewynge the wounde, and that ye gyve hym youre doughter to wyfe, and halfe youre empyre with her." Themperour this herynge, was of his counseyll very gladde, and incontynent all haste proclamed and publysshed thrugheout all the empyre, and thought that the knyght had gyuen hym good counseyll.

HOW THE SENESSCHAL THRUSTE A SPERE-
HEED IN TO HIS THYGHE, WENYNge TO
HAUE BEGYLED THE EMPEROUR, AND TO
HAUE WONNE HIS DOUGHTER THERBY.



LT befell in shorte tyme after, that the senesshall had knowlege and understandynge of the emperour's proclamation, and how he myghte wyne themperour's doughter, whiche he had many tymes bene about, he dyde grete dylygence, and caused to be sought and gotten a whyte horse and white harnays, and thryste a spere heed in his thyghe, wenyng therby to deceyue themperour, and to gete his doughter to wyfe; and whan this was done he commaunded all his men to arme them, and ryde wyth hym to the emperour; and he rode so sore tyll he came to Rome with great royalte and solace, and without ony taryenge he rode streyght to the emperour, saynge to hym in this wyse: "My lorde I am he that you so valyauntly receyued: thre tymes I haue caused you to haue honoure and victorie ayenst the cursed Sarasyns." Themperour thynkyng upon no treason nor deceyte, sayd: "Ye be a valyaunt and a wyse knyght; but I had went the contrarye, for we haue taken you for a vylayne and a forsworne knyght." The senesshall was very angry and sore moued here withall, and answered the emperoure shortly and angerly: "My lorde emperour, meruayll you nothyng here of, for I am not

such a cowarde as ye wene that I be:" and thus saynge he toke out the spere-heed and shewed it the emperour, and uncouered the wounde the whiche he had made hymselfe in hys thyghe. The knyghte stode by whiche that hurt Robert before, and began to compasse in his mynde, for he se well that it was not the heed of the spere, but he durst saye nothyng for fere, lest the senesshall wolde haue kylled hym. We wyll leue nowe of the senesshall, and speke of Robert, which is among dogges, sore wounded, as ye have herde before.

HOW GOD SENT AN AUNGELL TO THE HEREMYTE THAT HE SHOLDE GOO TO ROME AND SEKE ROBERT, FOR HE HAD FULL DOONE HIS PENAUNCE.



THE heremyte whiche ye haue herde of before, that shroue and sette Robert his penaunce, laye on a nyght in his selle and slepte, and thus slepyng there cam to hym a voyce, and bad hym lyghtly aryse and goo to Rome, to the place where Robert was doynge his penaunce; and the aungell tolde the heremyte all the doynges of Robert, shewyng how that his penaunce was fully done, and that God hadde forgyuen hym his synnes, wherof the heremyte was uery gladde, and in the mornynge erly he arose and wente to Rome warde, and in lyke wyse in the same mornynge the senesshall rose be tyme and wente to Rome to the emperoure to desyre and haue his doughter accordyng to the publycacyon and crye, to the whiche the emperoure consented her to hym without any longe aduysement. But whan the doughter understode that she was gyuen to the senesshall she raylled and raged as thoughe she hadde ben wood and madde; she tare her hare from her heed, and all to tare her clothes, but it myght nothyng auayle her, for she was constrayned, and must be arayed lyke a bryde, and an emperour's doughter which shold be maryed, and the emperour ladde her by the hande hymselfe to the chyrche royally accompanied with lordes and ladyes and gentylwomen, but the doughter made the gretest sorowe of the worlde in so moche that no man coude content her mynde.

HOW THE EMPEROUR'S DOUGHTER
THRUGHE THE GRACE OF GOD BEGAN FOR
TO SPEKE THE FYRST WORDE THAT EVER
SHE SPAKE IN HER LYFE.



THAN as the emperour with all his estate was come in to the chyrche, the emperour's doughter whiche was dumbe, sholde marye the senesshall, there dyde our lorde a fayre myracle, for the loue of the holy man Robert, to the entente he sholde be exalted, whome euery body helde fer a fole and with hym mocked. Whan the preest sholde begyn the seruyce, and to marye the senesshall and this yonge mayde togyder, the doughter thrughe the grace of God began to speke to the emperoure her fader in this wyse: "Fader I holde you not wyse, but fer ouer sene in that ye byleue that this proude folysse traytoure telleth you, for all that he telleth you is lyes; but here in this towne is a holy and deuoute persone, for whose sake God hath gyuen me my speche, wherefore I loue hym in my herte, for I haue alwaye sene and marked his valyance and holynes, but noo man wolde byleue me what poyntyng or sygnes that I made:" thenne the emperoure this herynge, was almoost oute of his mynde for joye whan he herde his doughter thus speke, the whiche neuer spake before, wherby he knewe well ynough that the senesshall hadde betrayed and deceyued hym: the senesshall this herynge, was wode angry and foule ashamed, and lyghten upon his horse and rode awaye and all his companye. The pope beyng presente axed the mayden who the man was that she spoke of, that the mayde ladde the pope and the emperour her fader to the fountayne where Robert was wonte to arme and unarme hym, and there she toke out the spere heed from bytwene the two stones where that Robert had hydde it, and than she caused the spere for to be brought forth, where of the heed was broken, whiche was lyghtely brought to her, and that heed and the spere joynde togyder in one as cloes as



thoughe they hadde not be broken, than sayd the mayde to the pope, "we have hadde thre tymes vycторыe by his noble valyaunce ayenst the myscredaunte Sarasyns, for I haue thre tymes sene his horse and harnays wherwith he hath thre tymes armed and unarmed hym, but I can not tell who brought hym horse and harnays, nor unto whom he delyuered it, but I knowe well that whan he hadde this done he layde hymselfe downe by the dogges"; and the mayden sayd unto the emperoure her fader in this wyse, "This is he that hathe saued youre landes and youre honoure, and gate you vycторыe of the Hethen houndes the Sarasyns, wherfore ye ought of deute to rewarde hym, and yf it please you we wyll go all to hym and speke with hym;" than wente they for the fole, the emperour and the doughter with all the lordes and ladyes unto Robert, whome they founde lyenge among dogges, they folowed hym and dyde hym reuerence, but Robert answered them not.

HOW THE HEREMYTE FOUND ROBERT, AND
COMMAUNDED HYM TO SPEKE, SAYNGE TO
HYM, THAT HIS PENAUNCE WAS FULLE
DONE AND HIS SYNNE FORGYUEN.

THE emperour spake to Robert and said, "I praye you swete frende come to me and shewe me your thyghe I wyll nedes se;" whan Robert herde themperour say these wordes he wyst well ynoughe wherfore he was comen to hym, but he lete hym as thoughe he had not understonden hym, and Robert dyde many madde conceytes to make the pope and themperour to laughe and forgate that they spoke of, but the pope spake to Robert, and coniured hym in the name of God that on the crosse dyed for our redempcyon, that yf it be Goddes wyll that thou haste spoken that thou speke now unto us, and than Robert rose up lyke a fole and gaue the pope his blessynge, and here withall Robert loked behynde hym and sawe the heremyte that set hym his penaunce and as soone

as the heremyte se Robert whiche he had longe sought he cryed to hym with a loude voyce that every man myght here hym that were there: "My frende herken unto me I knowe well that ye be Robert that men calle the deuyll, but now ye be in grace and conceyte with Almyghty God, and for that foule and hydeous name ye shall haue a fayre name, and be called the Seruaunte of God, ye be he that hath saued this lande from the Sarasyns, wherfore I praye you that ye serue and worshyp God as ye haue done hyderto, for oure Lorde sendeth me now to you commaundynge you to speke, and no more to counterfeyte the fole, for it is Goddes wyll and commaundement, for he hath forgyuen you all your synnes, for by caus ye haue made satysfacyon and full done your penaunce:" whan Robert herde this he fell lyghtely on his knees and lyfte up his handes towardre Heuen saynge thus, "I gyue laude and thanks to God creature of Heuen and erthe, that it hath pleased the to forgyue me myne abhomynable and grete synnes thrughe so lytell and lyght penaunce that I haue done:" therefore, whan the pope, the emperour and the doughter, and all that were there present herde Robert speke thus swetely, they were all heer of gretely enioyed and had grete meruayll of; themperoure seyng his noble valyaunce vertue and curtesye that in hym was and wolde haue gyuen hym his doughter to wyfe, but the heremyte wolde not it sholde be so wherfore euery man departed and wente home.





HOW ROBERT TOUNED AGAYNE TO ROME
FOR TO MARYE THE EMPEROUR'S DOUGH-
TER BY THE COMMAUNDEMENT AND WYLL
OF GOD.

NOW the storye telleth as after that Robert had remys-
syon of his synnes and was gone towarde his
countre, than out of Rome God commaunded hym that
he sholde tourne agayne to Rome and marye the
emperour's doughter, whiche loued hym passyngly well,
and he sholde haue by her a sone wherby the Crysten beleue
sholde be encreased and fortifyed and defended. Robert at
the commaundement of God turned agayne a Rome and
maryed theemperour's doughter with grete tryumphe and
solace, for theemperour and all the Romainys were therof very
glad, this brydale was royally kepte and euery man that se
Robert loued hym aboue all other; and the people sayd one
to another, that they were gretely beholdynge to Robert
that he had redemed them from theyr mortall enmyes the
Sarasyngs, this feest was grete and notable and dured xiiij
dayes, and whan the feest and brydale was done Robert
wolde departe with his lady into Normandye to vysyte his
fader and mother, and toke leue of theemperour whiche gaue
hym many royall and grete gyftes, as golde and siluer and
precyous stones of diuerse colours, also theemperour gaue hym
knyghtes and squyers to ryde and conduyte hym in to his
countree.

HOW ROBERT AND HIS LADY CAME TO
ROWANE IN NORMANDYE WITH GRETE
HONOUR AND WORSHIP.



ROBERT and his lady rode soo ferre they came into Normandye into the noble cyte of Rowane with grete myrth and solace, where they were receyued with grete tryumphe for the comyntees of the countree were sorye and in grete heuyness that theyr duke Robert's fader was dyseased, for bycause that he was a wyse and a renommed prynce. A lytell besyde dwelled a cursed knyght, whiche hadde done the duchesse grete wronge and suppressed many knyghtes after her husbondes dysease. But whan Robert was come euery man dradde hym and dyde hym grete reuerence and worshypp, than some sayd we wende he had ben deed, and all the lordes and burgeys of Rowane, gadred them togyder and with grete honoure and reuerence they receyued Robert and helde hym as theyr lorde and souerayne. And whan they hadde receyued hym honourably they shewed hym of this before sayd knyght; he hadde many tymes suppressed, and done wronge to his moder, sythen the deth of his fader; than whan Robert herde and understode this, he sente lyghtely men of armes to take the sayd knyght the whiche dyde so moche that they toke hym and brought hym to Robert whiche made hym to be hanged, wherfore the duches was ryght glad, but she was moche more gladder that Robert her sone was come home, for she wende he hadde ben deed; and whan Robert and his moder were thus togyder, he recounted unto her how the emperour had gyuen hym his doughter in maryage, and how he had done his penaunce, the duchesse herynge her sones wordes, she began to wepe very sore, for bycause he had suffred so grete pouerte and penaunce thrughe his defaute.



HOW THE EMPEROUR SENT A MESSANGER
UNTO THE DUKE ROBERT, THAT HE SHOLDE
COME AND RESCUE HYM AYENST THE
SENESSHALL.

IN the meane season, whyles Robert was thus at Rowane with his moder and his lady in grete joye and solace, there came a messenger fro the emperour unto Robert whiche dyde hym reuerence, and saynge thus unto hym: "My lorde duke, the emperour hathe sente me hyther to you, and he prayeth you for to come and rescue hym ayenst the false traytoure the senesshall with the Sarasyns, which haue layde syege to Rome." Whan Robert herde these wordes, he was sorye in his mynde for themperour, and shortly assembled as many men of armes as he coude get in his lande of Normandye, and forth withall rode with them towarde Rome, to helpe and socoure the emperour; but before he coude come thyder the false traytour the senesshall had slayne the emperour, which was grete pyte; but Robert wente streyght into Rome, and lyghtly with all his power and myght went ayenst the senesshall. And whan Robert aspyed the false traytoure, he descryed hym, saynge thus: "Abyde, thou false traytour, now thou shalte neuer escape my handes yf thou abyde me in the felde, for thou art now nygh thy lyve's ende; thou dydest putte ones a spere-heed in thy thygh for to haue deceyued the Romainys, defende now thy lyue ayenst me, for thou shalte neuer escape myn handes, and thou hast also slayne my lorde themperoure, wherfore thou shalt be well rewarded after that thou hast deserued." And with these wordes Robert, with a grete desyre and myghty courage, rode unto the senesshall and gaue hym suche stroke on the helmette, that he clove helmet and heed unto the teeth, and in contynente the traytour fell downe deed unto the erth, and Robert made hym to be brought in to Rome, to the entente that he sholde there be slayne to reuenge the Romainys, the whiche was done in the presence of all the

people that were in Rome; and in this wyse fenysshed that traytour the senesshall his lyfe, and had a shameful death, wherby men may make and take hede that it is grete folye to coveyte or desyre thynges passynge theyr degre; for and the senesshall had not desyred the emperoure's doughter, the whiche passed and exceded ferre aboue his degree, he had not dyed this shameful deth, but myght haue lyued and the emperour also, and haue dyed good frendes.

HOW THAT THE DUKE ROBERT TOURNED
AGAYNE TO ROWAYNE AFTER HE HAD MADE
THE SENESSHALL TO BE SLAYNE.



ROBERT the duke defended the cyte from theyr enemyes, and than he retourned agayne with all his compaignie unto Rowane to his wyfe, whiche was passynge sorrowfull and pensyfe; but whan she herde that the traytour the senesshall had slayne her fader, she was almost out of her mynde; but Robert's moder comforted her in the best maner that she coude or myght. And for to make shortely an ende of our mater, and so to fenysshe this boke we wyll lette passe to wryte of the grete dole and sorowe of the yonge duchesse, and speke of the duke Robert, whiche in his youth was about to all myschefe and vyce, and all ungracyousnes, without ony measure or reason, for he was a greter devourer, and a more vengeable, than any lyon, nothyng sparynge, nor on no man hauynge mercy nor pyte. And after this he lyued xii yere in grete penaunce, lyke a wylde man, without ony speche, and lyke a dumbe beest etynge and drynkynge with dogges, and there after was he exalted and honoured of them, whiche before dyde holde hym for a fole or an innocent, and mocked with hym. This Robert lyued longe in vertue and honoure with that noble ladye his wyfe, and he was beloued and dradde of hyghe and lowe degre, for he dyde ryght and justyce, as well ouer the ryche as ouer the poore, kepyng his lande in reste and in pease, and begote a chylde with her, and whiche he called Rycharde, whiche dyde afterwarde many noble actes and dedes of armes with grete Charlemayne kynge of Fraunce, for he dyde helpe hym for to gere and fortifye the

Crysten fayth, and he made alwayes grete warre upon the Sarasyns. And he lyued in his lande in rest and pease, and was beloued of poore and ryche, and all his comente loued hym in lykewyse as Robert his fader was loued, for they lyued bothe deuoutly and in vertue, wherfore I praye God that we may so lyue in this lyfe we may optayne and come to euerlastynge lyfe. To the whiche brynge us he that bought us and al mankynde with his preecyous blode and bytter passyon. Amen.

Thus endeth the lyfe of Robert the Deuyll,
That was the seruaunt of our Lorde,
And of his condycyons that was full euyl,
Emprynted in London by Wynkyn de Worde.

Here endeth the lyfe of the most feerfullest and unmercyfullest and myscheuous Robert the Deuyll, whiche was afterwarde called the Seruaunt of our Lorde Jhesu Cryste. Emprynted in Flete-strete in the sygne of the sonne, by WYNKYN DE WORDE.



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